



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND CANADA

***RADIO MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PEOPLE OF NEW MEXICO***

Monday, 14 September 1987

Dear People of New Mexico,

1. Although it has not been possible to include *New Mexico* in this pastoral visit to the United States, I am happy to have this occasion to extend to all of you my cordial good wishes. I wish to include in this greeting all the people of every cultural and religious tradition, particularly *the Native Americans*. The ancient Indian dwellings which still remain today speak eloquently of the richness of your unique heritage. May you always preserve and draw strength from the worthy traditions which have been handed down to you from the past.

I offer a special greeting to my brothers and sisters of *the Catholic faith* who live in New Mexico. The first beginnings of the faith in this area go back to the time of the first Spanish missionaries who came from Mexico. The impact of the Gospel on your history and culture is clearly reflected in the names of your cities, such as Las Cruces, Santa Rosa and Socorro. Even your colourful mountains refer to Christ and the saints, with names such as Sangre de Cristo, San Andreas and San Mateo. It seems very fitting, then; that the capital of your State and your Archdiocesan See should bear the name of *Santa Fe*, the holy faith, for indeed the Catholic faith has greatly influenced the history and culture of New Mexico.

2. My sentiments in your regard are captured by the words of Saint Paul who said: "*We keep thanking God for all of you and we remember you in our prayers, for we constantly are mindful before our God and Father of the way you are proving your faith, and labouring in love, and showing constancy of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1Thess. 1, 2-3).

Our *identity* as Christians is rooted in *the gift of faith*. We have come to know and to believe in Christ. We are convinced that he is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (*Jo.* 14, 6). And while we treasure this gift of faith, we know too that it must be guarded and developed, strengthened and shared. We must exercise our faith in love, putting it into practice in every aspect of our daily lives.

This precious gift shapes our whole vision of the future. For the deeper our love for Christ, the more confidently we trust in God's providential care for ourselves and those who are dear to us, and for the future of the world. As the Letter to the Hebrews says: "*Faith is confident assurance concerning what we hope for, and conviction about things we do not see*" (*Hebr.* 11, 1).

And so, dear brothers and sisters in the Lord: "Let us lay aside every encumbrance of sin which clings to us and persevere in running the race which lies ahead. *Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who inspires and perfects our faith*" (*Ibid.* 12, 1-2).

May the Lord strengthen each of you in faith, and fill you with love and joy. God bless New Mexico!

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